

\$ 5,000 REWARD OFFERED IN TURKEY CLUBBING CASE

The Moroni Feed Company, the state's largest turkey growing cooperative, along with two agriculture industry groups are offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals responsible for the killing of nearly 1,200 turkeys in Sanpete County February 7, 2004. According to Tim Blackham, Moroni Feed Cooperative Board Chairman, the incident occurred at one of their grower's barns in Sanpete County. Blackham says 1,198 nine-week old tom turkeys were clubbed to death by several individuals using sticks or other weapons.

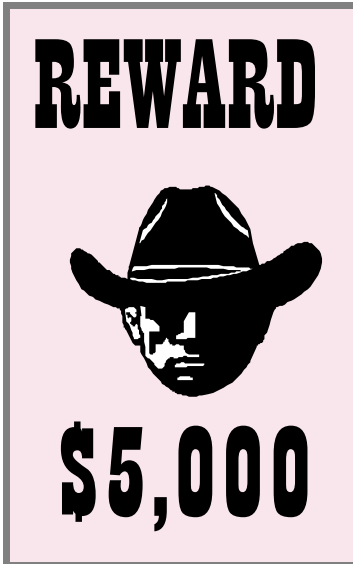
"We consider this an outrageous act of cruelty inflicted on one of our agricultural businesses," said Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson. "We support all efforts available to find and punish those responsible," he added.

The reward fund is made up of offers of \$3,000 from Moroni Feed Co., \$1,000 from the Utah Farmers' Union and \$1,000 from the Utah Farm Bureau.

Farmers' Union President, Arthur Douglas says this is more than an act of vandalism. "We view this incident as intolerable, and offer our full support to help find and prosecute those responsible."

Utah Farm Bureau President, Leland Hogan, says, "We wish to send a message to those who treat animals otherwise; that these acts of violence strike at the foundation of our industry and we will invest considerable resources to locate and punish those responsible."

Anyone with information about the turkey killings can contact the Sanpete County Sheriff's office at (435) 835-2191.



Richard Lohmeyer Scores Big: Named The Nation's Best High School Football Referee

The National Federation of High School Football Officials has named Richard Lohmeyer its national "Referee of the Year" for 2003. Lohmeyer is the Utah Department of Agriculture and Foods' assistant manager for its Meat Inspection Program, and has been a high school football referee for the past 32 years.

Lohmeyer is in a league by himself. He has refereed at least 10 games a season, plus playoffs, for 32 years. That adds up to more than 350 games that he's whistled. How did he become the best in the country? "I have to attribute the recognition to experience and knowing the game," Lohmeyer said. He works very hard at getting the penalty calling right. Lohmeyer was selected Utah's referee of the year in 2003 because of his long-standing reputation as being accurate and fair. That recognition put him in the running for the national title along with his counterparts from 49 other states. Coaches don't dispute his penalty-calling...that much.

"The hardest penalties to call are the pass-interference fouls which involve judgment calls," he said. "Some coaches get pretty vocal because they don't know all the rules of the game."

He says high school football has evolved over the years. Kids are more aggressive and plays are more sophisticated. "I do this because I love the game, and I love helping young players learn something important in life."



UDAF's Richard Lohmeyer (center) pauses with the refereeing crew at the 2002 Utah 5A high school football championship game at Rice-Eccles stadium in Salt Lake City.

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Utah Beekeepers Hold Annual Convention At UDAF Building

By: Utah Beekeepers Association

The Utah Beekeepers Convention was held December 4th & 5th, 2003. Commissioner Cary G. Peterson welcomed all the Beekeepers from throughout the State of Utah to the convention.

State Entomologist, Ed Bianco, spoke about spraying and the concern with the West Nile Virus. There was a lot of concern expressed from Beekeepers because of the improper use of Aerial Spraying and killing the Honeybees. The use of Feurodan is a huge concern because it will destroy Honeybees where ever it is used.

Speakers included Burt Belliston, a migratory beekeeper, runs over 6,000 colonies from Idaho, Utah and Montana. John Miller, a migratory beekeeper, runs 12,000 colonies from North Dakota to California. Bob Coyle, from the National Honey Board, discussed the top ten Priorities of the National Honey Board and our focus to sell pure honey. Information can be found at the National Honey Boards web site www.nhb.org or www.honeylocator.com.

Many of Utah's own Beekeepers also spoke. Mel Taylor from St. George gave a demonstration on how they make bee packages. MarJean Cox, from Cox Honey Land in Logan, showed us gift baskets and ways to sell our Honey. Reports were given from the Utah County Beekeepers Association and the Wasatch Beekeepers Association. The good news is that the price of honey is up and many beekeepers are happy about finally getting a better price for all their efforts.

With the decline in the number of colonies in Utah, it is important that farmers help keep the honeybees healthy for pollination and honey production in Utah. The beekeepers in the state are anxious to work closely with farmers and mosquito abatement districts to further the quality of our crops. The following people serve on the Board of the Utah Beekeepers Association: Wayne Perry-President, Robert Yack-President Elect, Gayon Yack-Past President, Roger Stephenson-Director, Melvin Taylor-Director, Debbie Amundsen-Director, Kathy Jones-Treasurer, Larry Knowlden-Secretary. For information about the Utah Beekeepers Association contact Larry Knowlden on email at: beekeeper-larry@juno.com.

Ranchers In 16 Western States Will Pay More To Graze Herds On Federal Land

From: Billings Gazette, Feb. 20

WASHINGTON - Ranchers across the West will see an increase in the monthly fee they pay to graze their herds on federal land, the Bush administration said Friday.

Beginning March 1, the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service will raise their monthly rate from \$1.35 to \$1.43 per month. The monthly fee covers grazing of a horse, a cow and calf, or five sheep or goats.

Jeff Eisenberg, director of federal land programs for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said the figure is rising because beef prices were at an all-time high during the period the government gathered data used to compute the new fee.

The new rate will apply to public lands in 16 Western states that are administered by the BLM and Forest Service. The states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Japan confirms 10th suspected case of mad cow disease near Tokyo

Canadian Press via Canada.com

TOKYO (AP) - Japanese authorities confirmed the nation's 10th case of mad cow disease since the first sick animal was discovered in September 2001.

A dairy cow tested positive for the disease at a slaughterhouse outside Tokyo.

The animal was slaughtered and its meat and organs will be incinerated, the ministry said.

Japan was the first country to find an infected cow outside of Europe, where it has devastated cattle farms.

U.S. Department of Agriculture National Statistical Service

2003 Crop Values

By: Richard Kestle, State Statistician

UTAH: The preliminary value of principal crops including field crops, fruits, and vegetables produced in Utah during 2003 was \$284.5 million, up 6.1 percent from the 2002 crop year, according to the Utah Agricultural Statistics Service.

The 2003 all hay crop was valued at \$215.8 million, up \$5.4 million from 2002. The price per ton was down \$6.50 to \$88.00. Alfalfa hay was valued at \$194.0 million, down slightly from the 2002 value. The price per ton was \$89.00, down \$7.50 from the previous year. All other hay was valued at \$21.9 million, up 37.2 percent from the previous year. Oats, valued at \$1,156,000 was up slightly from 2002. The price of \$2.35 per bushel was down 20 cents from the previous year. Barley was valued at \$6.3 million, down 9.6 percent from the 2002 crop. The average price of \$2.25 per bushel was down 17 cents from 2002. The all wheat crop, at \$20.3 million, was down 10.7 percent. The price per bushel at \$3.65 was down \$1.00 from last year. Winter wheat was valued at \$18.5 million, down 8.3 percent from 2002. The average price per bushel for winter wheat was \$3.60, a decrease of \$1.00 from the previous year. Spring wheat was valued at \$1,840,000, down 29.5 percent from last year. The average price per bushel for other spring wheat, at \$4.00 per bushel, was down \$1.05. Corn for grain was valued at \$6.05 million, down 6.4 percent from the previous year. The average price per bushel, at \$3.00, was down 18 cents from 2002. Dry edible beans was valued at \$283,000, an increase of \$190,000 million from 2002. It was valued at \$17.70 per cwt, down \$.80 from 2002. All potatoes was valued at \$2.8 million, up 15.3 percent from 2002.